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Middle Temple Hall.—Lower end from the Dais.



# MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL.

Notes upon its history collected  
from the Records of the Middle  
Temple Society.

By

J. BRUCE WILLIAMSON,

A Master of the Bench.

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# Some Notes on the Hall of the Hon. Society of the Middle Temple.

Collected from the Records of the Inn.

The Hall of the Middle Temple Society has long been an object of attraction to visitors at the Inns of Court. Fortunately escaping the destruction so widely wrought in the Temple by two devastating fires in the reign of Charles II, it still remains as described two centuries ago by one who knew it well—a beautiful and stately room which may vie with any other of the like nature in the kingdom. Planned and erected in the early years of Queen Elizabeth, it stands to-day a visible reminder of “the spacious times” in which she ruled, and a crowning glory of Tudor domestic architecture.

Begun in 1562, when the Society did not number half its present members, the Hall was not completed till eleven years later. The chief credit of carrying out the undertaking belongs to Edmund Plowden, that distinguished son of the Middle Temple whose career was summed up by John Camden in the following pregnant words : “ In knowledge of Law *facile princeps*

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and in integrity of life second to none." Treasurer or chief Executive Officer of the Society during the first six years of the undertaking, Plowden, on vacating that office, was, by the express direction of his fellow-members, appointed Procurator and Promoter of the work until the Hall should be completed. His name and Arms occupy a place of honour in the principal window of the Hall with the date 1573 and an inscription in Latin recording how with the greatest care he perfected the work for those who cultivate the Laws. Of that completed work it is proposed to offer some account in the observations which follow.

Including the passage under the Gallery at the East or lower end the Hall measures in length 101 feet 3 inches, in height from the floor to the level of the wall plate 30 feet and to the apex of the roof 57 feet 6 inches, and in width 40 feet 9 inches except where at the two bays 15 feet 7 inches more are added on the South and 10 feet 7 inches on the North side. The sumptuous Screen with its rich carvings which supports the Gallery was erected in 1574 and its elegant double-leaved doors were added in 1671 under circumstances which will be noticed hereafter.

The Hall is lit by 14 windows ; five of like dimensions on either side, two bay windows and one at either end of the room. Of these the window in the South bay much exceeds the others in size and is generally referred to as the Great Window. The most impressive feature of the interior is the fine hammer-beam roof of an unusual double construction which, if it does not



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increase the stability of the structure, at least gives it an added richness of design. Though repaired and strengthened from time to time its timbers still retain their original appearance except where coats of varnish have disguised the true colour of the oak. The roof carries a lantern or cupola through which ventilation is obtained and which at one time afforded an exit for the smoke of the open fire formerly placed beneath the cupola in the centre of the room and only abolished in 1830. As there are no accounts now in the possession of the Society earlier than the year 1638, information is not available to prove the cost of the Hall's construction. Nor is it known who designed its admirable proportions or what cunning hand executed the remarkable carvings which adorn the Screen.

Coats of Arms upon the wainscoting of the Hall which are so conspicuous a feature of its decoration first appeared there in the year 1697 when Francis Morgan was Treasurer. Transferred from another room used as the Parliament or Council Chamber of the Society, they then numbered 113. They now number 463. Painted upon panels attached to the wainscot by gilt frames they commemorate members of the Inn who have held the Office of Reader. This office is of great antiquity and probably as old as the Society itself. Two Readers are elected annually. One for the Lent and another for the Summer Reading. In ancient times the Readers presided over the educational work of the House and had in addition important ceremonial duties. Originally service in the

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office qualified the holder for admission to the Bench or governing body of the Inn. In later times no one was eligible for the office who was not already a Master of the Bench and that is the practice which now prevails.

These Coats of Arms are accompanied by inscriptions giving the name of the Reader, the period of his office (whether for the Lent or Summer Reading) and the year in which he discharged the duties. Following the ancient practice the inscriptions are still made in Latin; the Lent Reader being described as *Lector Quadragesimalis* (or *Quadrag.*) and the Summer Reader as *Lector Autumnalis* (or *Autumn.*). Although the names of the Readers of the Middle Temple are on record from the year 1500 the earliest Reader commemorated in the Hall read in the year 1597, and after that for a time the series is intermittent. During the nineteen years covered by the Civil War and the Interregnum (1642—1660) no Readings were held in the Inns of Court. There are therefore no memorials of this nature during that period. Further, at certain times in the 18th century only one Reader was appointed in each year. In such cases therefore the distinction between Lent and Summer Reading is wanting.

Originally the inscriptions on these panels were brief, setting out the name of the Reader without any further description than *Armiger* (for Esquire) or *Miles* in the case of a Knight. As no one was eligible for election to the office who was not a member of



Middle Temple Hall.— Upper end from the Screen.



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the Society the description Serjeant-at-Law never appears, because on promotion to that ancient degree membership was terminated by the recipient *ipso facto* passing into one of the Inns reserved for Serjeants only. This consequence also prevented any Judge of the Common Law Courts at Westminster holding the office of Reader after he was raised to the Bench, as all such Judges if not already Serjeants were called to that degree on appointment. The same rule never applied to the more modern distinction of King's Counsel, hence in later times this addition, rendered *Consilarius Domini Regis ad Legem*, begins to appear in certain cases upon these panels. Further other descriptions, such as Recorder, County Court Judge, and even Member of Parliament, have more recently been added; and now that the dignity of Serjeant-at-Law is no longer conferred, the disability it imposed upon Judges has ceased to operate, so that retaining their membership of the Inn they also have become eligible for election as Readers. A new position evidenced by the phrase Justice of the High Court (rendered *Magnæ Curie Justiciarius*) which is sometimes found on the later panels.

As the Readers' panels are now so numerous it is not possible here to notice in detail more than a few of them. Attention, therefore, by way of illustration, will be drawn only to the interest attaching to some of the earlier ones. The oldest are in the South bay, where the series begins with Richard Swayne, who read in 1597. This Reader is note-

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worthy as the last who was a double Reader, i.e., twice elected to the office first as Summer Reader in 1597 and a second time in 1609 as Lent Reader. The original system of double reading was abolished as the membership of the Society increased, probably because it impeded promotion to the Bench of the Inn, for so long as it continued (under the practice then prevailing) only one member could become qualified in each year to enter the governing body. On the East side of this bay are also the panels of Nicholas Hyde (1616) and John Bramston (1622), each subsequently Chief Justice of the King's Bench. Sir John Bramston's panel records a second reading by him in the next year *pro gradu*. This has reference to an ancient custom under which a member of the Inn, if called to the Serjeant's degree, might be requested to read again as Serjeant-elect before he left the Society. In which case he displaced the elected Reader for a part of the Reading. Here also are the panels of Richard Lane, appointed Keeper of the Great Seal by Charles I (1645), and of James Whitlock and Robert Barkley, subsequently judges of the King's Bench. On the West side of the same bay occur the panels of Thomas Malett (later a Judge of the same Court), of Richard Pepys, Chief Justice of Ireland (1655), William Montague, Chief Baron of the Exchequer (1682), and Robert Hyde, also Chief Justice (1663). Further, close to this bay, at the upper end of the Hall, are the Arms of William Hussey, the last Reader elected (1642) before the outbreak of the Civil War, and of his successor,



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Thomas Mundy, the next elected (1660) at the Restoration of the Monarchy.

In the continuation of the series in the North Bay should be noticed the panel of Sir John Somers, "the oracle of the Revolution," who read when Solicitor-General in 1689; while under the portrait of King William III is the shield of Sir Philip Yorke, Solicitor-General to King George II, and later Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, who was Reader in 1721. In the lowest row of Arms at this end of the Hall will be found the panels of the latest Readers whose names are recorded in the Hall, including those of some distinguished modern lawyers.

Some of the bearings on the Readers' Arms in the Hall afford curious examples of canting heraldry. Thus in the South Bay Peter Ball, who read in 1640, and afterwards suffered much in the cause of King Charles I, has three fire balls; while in the North Bay Paul Bowes (1684) has three bows, Daniel Fox (1693) three foxes' heads, and John Viney (1702) a bunch of grapes.

At the upper end of the Hall Alexander Staples (1673) has three staples *sable*, John Welbore (1721) two boars passant *argent*, Henry Partridge (1723) three partridges rising, and Edward Shelley (1742) three shells *or*.

But the most remarkable cases occur on the North side of the Hall, where James Whalley (1770) carries three whales' heads spouting *sable*, John Delafont (1774) a fountain playing into a basin, William

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Hollingsworth Quayle (1848) three quayles, and Robert Scarr Sowler (1871) three shoe soles.

Seven royal portraits adorn the upper or West end of the Hall, including pictures of Queen Elizabeth, Charles I, Charles II, James II (as Duke of York), Queen Anne, William III and George I. Of these the first to be acquired by the Society were the portraits of Charles I and the Duke of York. They were purchased in the year 1684, when the Hon. Roger North (the brother and biographer of Lord Keeper Guilford) was Treasurer. The picture of King Charles, which is much the largest in the Hall, represents the King in armour, but with head uncovered, seated upon a white horse and wearing the Garter ribbon across his breast. In the right-hand corner of the picture, and holding the royal helmet, is the attendant figure of M. de St. Antoine, the most accomplished equestrian of his day, who served the King as Master of the Horse. This fine painting, which is clearly in Van Dyck's manner, is identical with a painting in the royal collection at Windsor and another at Warwick Castle. In the absence of information regarding its history before it came into the possession of the Society it would be hazardous to speak with certainty as to the Painter; but the suggestion, which has been made, that all three pictures are by the same Master hand, seems a not improbable one.

The portrait of the Duke of York (a full-length) represents him in Garter robes. A finely executed picture, it is attributed to John Riley, a painter of



Middle Temple Hall.—Picture of King Charles I.



distinction in his day, but whose reputation has suffered, it is said, through some of his best work being erroneously credited to Sir Peter Lely.

The next picture acquired by the Society was the portrait of Charles II, also in Garter robes. This is believed to have been a gift to the Society, as there is no record of its acquisition. It was in the possession of the Inn at least as early as the year 1693, when some expense was incurred in cleaning it. This picture is attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller.

The portraits of William III, Queen Anne and George I are all in coronation robes. That of Queen Anne was specially painted for the Inn by Thomas Murray in 1703, shortly after her accession to the throne. King William's picture is by the same artist, but was not purchased till 1725. The portrait of George I was also painted to the order of the Society and placed in the Hall in 1717. It is by a young foreign painter, Enoch Seeman, who later painted also King George II and Queen Caroline. Finally the portrait of Queen Elizabeth was obtained in 1879. The name of the artist is not known, but expert opinion has pronounced it contemporary with the Queen's reign, and probably executed about the close of the 16th century.

Among the furnishings of the Hall the first place must be given to the great or Bench table, which stands on the Dais at the West or upper end of the room, between the North and South bays. Consisting of three planks, each running the whole length of the table, it is 29 feet 4 inches in length, 3 feet 2 inches

in width, and was made, as tradition says, from oak grown in Windsor Forest, the gift of Queen Elizabeth when the Hall was built. Originally this table, after the manner of the time, no doubt stood upon trestles. The frame on which it now rests was made in 1730, by John Fieldhouse, the Carpenter of the Inn. His account, still preserved, shows that 47 cubic feet of wainscot (oak) were used for the purpose, which cost the Society the sum of £12 8s. 4d. Fieldhouse seems at the same time to have provided for the table six curved, or cabriole, legs (fashionable at that period), which appear in an engraving of the Hall dated 1800, and were later removed in favour of the more convenient pediments on which it now stands.

Another table of special interest is placed in the centre of the Hall, just below the great table. In size six feet by four, and known as the "Cupboard," this table is supported by four cabriole legs similar to those upon which the great table formerly stood. It is jealously guarded by a protecting wooden cover, which can be moved aside to show the ancient wood beneath. It is of English oak and has long been esteemed a special treasure of the Inn, being reputed to have been made from timber taken from the "Golden Hind," the ship in which Sir Francis Drake accomplished his immortal feat of circumnavigating the globe. This great seaman was an honoured member of the Society and further reference will be made hereafter to his connection with the Hall.

A "Cupboard" has from the earliest times been the



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centre of ceremonies in the Hall. It is mentioned in the surviving records of the Society as early as the reign of King Henry VII when the members were using the old Hall of the Templar Knights, subsequently pulled down. From it proclamation was made of matters affecting members in their collegiate life. By it the Readers stood to deliver their discourses and the four members, who were anciently appointed to attend the Reader at his reading and debate with him disputed points of law, were styled "cupboardmen." At it calls to the Bar were made and the oaths of allegiance and supremacy taken by the newly-called Barristers; and at this table in the present day those called to that degree enter their names in the book containing the Society's roll of Barristers. The date when the frame and legs which now support this table were made has not been definitely ascertained, but they appear to belong to the 18th century, and are shown in the engraving of the Hall published in 1800, already mentioned.

Below the "Cupboard," and also in the centre of the Hall, is another table known as the "Ancients' table," which is reserved at dinner time for the eight senior Barristers in Hall who are not Benchers. First instituted in 1595, after periods of abeyance it has been twice revived, once in 1671 and again in 1876.

The present oak flooring of the Hall also dates from 1730. It was laid by the same carpenter, John Fieldhouse, pursuant to an order of the Masters of the Bench made in May, 1729, and thus recorded—

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“ Ordered that there be a thorough repair of the Hall the next long vacation, and that the Hall and Hall passage be new floored and laid with oak, and that the same be referred to Master Treasurer to have done in such manner as may be most suitable to the nobleness of the building.”

Upwards of 750 cubic feet of Dantzic oak were used in carrying out the work, as appears from the carpenter's bill, which, receipted by his signature, is still in the possession of the Society. Most of the tables and forms now in use were also made at this time. It is said that when the original flooring was taken up about 100 pair of small dice, yellow with age, were found beneath it, having dropped through chinks between the old boards; a curious confirmation of the one time popularity of dicing in the Temple; an amusement encouraged by the Stuart Sovereigns as a suitable recreation to relieve the tedium of studying Law in the Inns of Court. Though in justice to the memory of King James I it should be added he laid down the rule that dice play was not to be permitted with strangers but only between gentlemen of the same Society.

The South bay of the Hall contains a wine cooler, of lead, bearing the date 1612. It is covered by two massive wooden lids carrying an inscription in brass which states that they were made from oak, part of the bridge or pier erected by the Knights Templars on their Thames frontage to afford them access at all states of the tide, to and from the river, the great mediæval highway between London and Westminster. This

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bridge was only finally removed when the Victoria Embankment was constructed in 1865.

The two busts at the upper end of the Hall, commemorate two distinguished brothers, John Scott, Earl of Eldon, and William Scott, Lord Stowell, both members of the Middle Temple Society, and called to the Bar in this Hall. The bust of Lord Eldon, who occupied the woolsack for the longest period on record, was presented to the Inn, by himself, in November, 1832, with a graceful expression of his consciousness of "how much he owed to having had the honour to be a student, Barrister and Benchers of that very honourable Society." A work of the sculptor, William Behnes, it stands in the South bay, below the picture of Queen Elizabeth.

The bust of Lord Stowell, famous as a Judge of Admiralty, is at the other end of the great table in the North bay. As he never was called to the Serjeant's degree, he remained a member of the Middle Temple Society till his death, in 1836, at the age of 90; in marked contrast to his brother, Lord Eldon, who left it 37 years earlier, when created a Serjeant, on his appointment as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1799. Lord Stowell was greatly esteemed by his brother Benchers, and this bust was presented to the Society (of which he had so long been a distinguished ornament) after his decease, by a number of his personal friends and admirers. There is also a very fine portrait of him by Thomas Phillips, R.A., in the lesser Parliament Chamber.

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One other bust remains to be noticed, that of Edmund Plowden, which stands on a marble pedestal at the lower end of the Hall in front of the screen. The gift of a former member of the Middle Temple, Robert W. H. Ingram, it was presented to the Society in the year 1868. Executed in Carrara marble, it shows this distinguished lawyer in the Elizabethan dress of his time. The sculptor, Mr. Morton Edwards, modelled it upon a terra-cotta bust of Plowden, made after death, and an original portrait, placed at his service by Mr. William Plowden, of Plowden Hall, in Shropshire. An inscription upon the column of Sicilian marble, which supports the bust, records Plowden's tenure of the office of Treasurer of the Society during six years, and his appointment thereafter as Procurator and Promoter of the building of the Hall until its completion.

The armour displayed in the Hall has been in the possession of the Society from time immemorial. Most of it belongs to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Its present arrangement was adopted on the best expert advice in 1862. Prior to that time plaster busts of the Cæsars, coloured to look like bronze, had for two centuries occupied places above the wainscot between the side windows. "Setting up the Emperors' heads" is mentioned as an item of expense in the accounts of the Inn for the year 1658. A few still survive on brackets in the Gallery, and at the upper end of the Hall. The armour includes (i.e.) nineteen demi-suits, comprising cabasset, gorget, breastplate and back

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piece with pauldrons. Sixteen of these are Elizabethan; some with breastplates of the finest peascod form. Two are of the 17th century, and one of the reign of Henry VIII. This last suit, with open casque, gorget and globose breastplate, is beneath Window III on the South side of the Hall. The two Oriental suits of chain mail, placed in front of crossed spears, on the North wall by the sides of Window XI, also belong to the 17th century. It should be noticed that the head piece of the demi-suit below that window differs from the others in being of Morion shape with a ridged crown. The German cross-bow (stock ivory inlaid), with detachable windlass and stirrup end, on the South wall, between Windows III and IV, is also of the 16th century. The six matchlocks beside the West window above the Daïs at the upper end of the Hall, are of the time of James I, as are also the other ten matchlocks set up against the side walls and in the North bay, nine of them accompanied by rests to be used in firing.

In the Gallery are two further suits of armour by the sides of the East window. The one on the North side being of the 16th century and the other chiefly of the 17th century. Finally, in addition, there are ten single cabassets, or steel head pieces, attached to the side walls at different points, four on the North and six on the South wall, all Elizabethan.

The two royal shields, surrounded by the Garter carved in oak and appropriately coloured, above the matchlocks at the West end of the Hall, date from 1907

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and the Treasurership of Mr. Justice Bigham, now Viscount Mersey. They display the Arms of Queen Elizabeth and King Edward VII, the first Sovereign to honour the Society by dining in Hall as a Bencher of the Inn.

In ancient times no doubt the Benchers sat at the High Table on forms, like other members of the House; though evidence is not wanting that they allowed themselves the indulgence of cushions. The present Bench chairs are of the 19th century.

Originally the Hall was lighted at night time by means of torches and candles, and later with oil lamps. In 1861 gas was first used for the purpose, and regularly installed in the following year, with chandeliers suspended down each side from the beams of the roof. Gas lighting continued until 1894, when electric light was substituted. The present grouped lights in torch form placed at intervals along the top of the wainscoting date from 1902.

On the back of the screen in the passage below the Gallery at the lower end of the Hall, are six further memorials of former members of the House blazoned on copper plates, and attached to the wainscoting. These plates, formerly fixed to the woodwork at the sides of the great window in the South Bay (three on either side), were removed to their present position in 1925. They commemorate the following Judges:—Sir William Blackstone, author of the famous Commentaries on the Laws of England, appointed a Justice of the King's Bench, 1770; Lord Walsingham, Chief



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Justice of the Common Pleas, 1771; Sir Beaumont Hotham, Baron of the Exchequer, 1775; Francis Buller, a Judge of the King's Bench, 1778, and of great reputation; James Hewitt, a Justice of the same Court, 1766, later Lord Chancellor of Ireland, 1768, and created Viscount Lifford; and Sir John Wilson, a Justice of the Common Pleas, 1786. With the exception of Lord Walsingham, none of these gentlemen held the office of Reader, or is otherwise commemorated in the Hall.

The ancient octagonal lamp, which hangs in this passage and is now lit by electric light, contains some interesting panels of modern glass, which include two ancient emblems of the Knights Templars, the Agnus Dei and the device of two Knights riding upon one horse; the ostrich feathers badge of the late King Edward VII as Prince of Wales; the Arms of Queen Elizabeth, the Middle Temple, Edmund Plowden, Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake. The Drake panel in this lamp displays the special coat of Arms granted to that great sea captain in recognition of his daring as a navigator—*sable* a fess wavy between two Polar stars Arctic and Antarctic *argent*.

At the South end of this passage an ancient Tudor door gives access to the private apartments of the Masters of the Bench. Its original use is uncertain but it probably came from the old hall built by the Templars, which formerly stood on the other side of Middle Temple Lane, and was used by the Society before the present Hall was built. The carved

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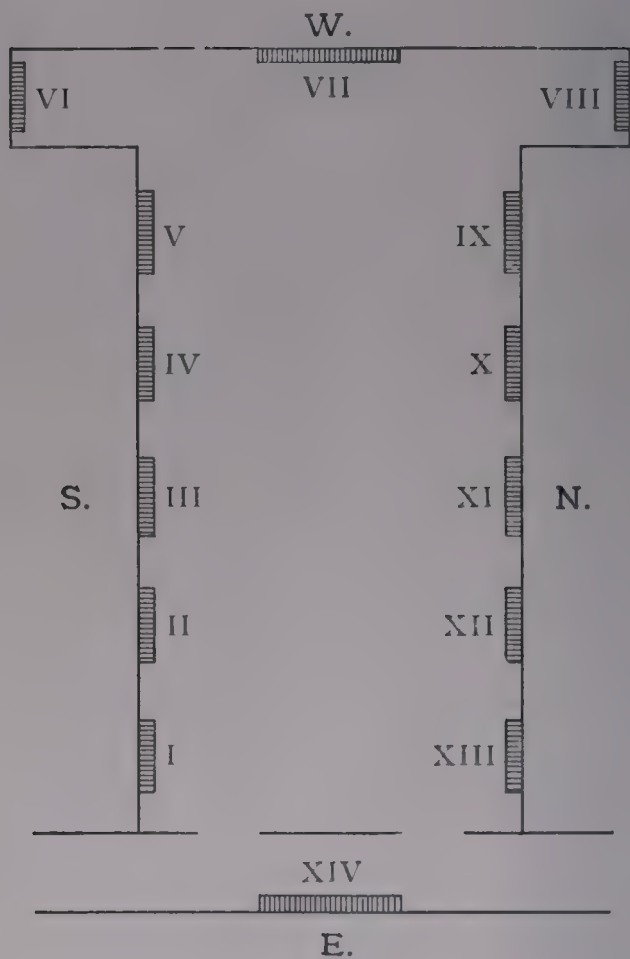
escutcheon, surmounted by the gilded figure of the holy Lamb, which is above this door, was part of a classical screen erected by Sir Christopher Wren in the Temple Church in 1681, and removed in 1840. Sir Francis Withens, whose name appears upon it, was Treasurer of the Inn in 1681, and later one of the three Judges who sat with Lord Jeffreys at the "Bloody Assize."

The elegant, elaborately-carved, two-leaved doors of the Hall screen, as already stated, are of later date than the screen itself, and the occasion of their erection is of interest as throwing light upon the collegiate life which formerly was a conspicuous feature of the Inn and the festivities connected with it. Christmas was naturally a favourite time for relaxation from study, and for centuries its celebration was observed with much formality at the Inns of Court, special officers being appointed annually for the occasion. Towards the close of the Stuart period, however, these celebrations came into disrepute owing to the licence and disorder which sometimes marked the proceedings. An instance of this occurred in the year 1669, causing the Benchers of the Middle Temple to prohibit the holding of any Xmas festivity in the following year. This order, however, was received with little favour or respect by some junior members of the Society, who (in the Benchers' absence), in defiance of all authority, took possession of the Hall and adjoining premises and, starting Xmas keeping on their own account, continued it for several weeks, with gaming and other

disorders. Such defiance could not be overlooked by the governing authority of the Inn. Accordingly in the ensuing Hilary term twelve of the arch offenders were fined £20 apiece, a servant, who had assisted in their proceedings, was summarily dismissed from his office, and an order enacted that doors should be put upon the screen so that in future the Hall might be more effectually closed against such unauthorised uses. This was promptly done, and the Treasurer's Accounts Book for the year contains full details, in the bills of the smith, the carpenter and the wood carver, of the expense thus incurred, which totalled in all £60 14s. The smith's bill included the iron " fleur de luce " spikes, which decorate the tops of the doors, and were no doubt intended to discourage any attempt to climb over them. But the most interesting bill is that of the wood carver, Matthew Taylor, which amounted in all to £25 2s. 10d. and was settled for £24. It is pleasing to note that more orderly times have made it possible to dispense with the locks the smith originally provided.

The decoration of the Hall wainscoting with Readers' Arms has its counterpart in the stained glass of the windows, and some account of this glass will now be given. For the most part the window heraldry, supported by conventional surrounds, is set in quarries, or diamond-shaped panes of clear cathedral glass; each of the ten side-windows being adapted to hold sixteen memorials. A like number are displayed in the North bay window. This system, which has the advantage of securing an adequate transmission of light, has, how-

Middle Temple Hall  
Numbering of Windows



ever, been departed from with doubtful benefit in the lowest compartments of two of the side-windows (No. III South and No. XI North) where the whole window space is obscured by stained glass.

The heraldic glass in the East and West windows at the two ends of the Hall has a similar setting of cathedral glass, except in the case of the lowest row of Arms in the East window, where the memorials are projected on brackets in front of the window because the glass behind them is in louvre form to assist ventilation. The great window in the South bay, which contains thirty-two memorials, is the subject of a special arrangement, but here also, in its upper half at least, copious use of clear glass has safeguarded the primary purpose of a window.

In Tudor and Stuart times, when the Inns of Court were educational institutions in a much wider sense than mere colleges of Law for the making of Barristers, and not more than 1 in 5 of their members was called to the Bar, it was the practice to admit to these Societies many persons of distinction, or destined for public service (but with no intention to practise as Lawyers) whose membership was valued on account of their rank or social influence. A circumstance which will explain the presence of some of the memorials mentioned hereafter. They were in fact centres of education for the higher classes, and it was as such that Ben Jonson proclaimed them "The noblest nurseries of liberty and humanity in the Kingdom."

Including Royal Arms and Badges there are in all

245 stained glass memorials in the windows of the Hall. Of these, 124 commemorate Judges, among whom can be counted 11 holders of the Great Seal (as Lord Keeper or Lord Chancellor), 34 Chief Justices, 10 Masters of the Rolls and 9 Chief Barons of the Exchequer, all at one time or another members of the Inn.

Among individual names must first be mentioned three Princes of the Royal House—H.M. King Edward VII, who joined the Society as Prince of Wales, October 14th, 1861, and, in November, 1886, honoured it by accepting the office of Treasurer for the ensuing year; his eldest son, the late Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale, admitted May 24th, 1890, and H.R.H. Prince Edward, now Prince of Wales, admitted July 2nd, 1919, and the same day, according to precedent, called to the Bar and Bench. These memorials of membership, each surrounded by the Order of the Garter, are in windows No. III and No. II, on the South side of the Hall.

Ten other members of the Society, who were likewise Knights of the Garter, find a place in the windows—In window No. III, Sir Lodovic Stuart, Duke of Lennox and Richmond (admitted in 1608), and Sir George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1617), the favourite of James I and King Charles I; in window IV, Sir William Knolles, Viscount Wallingford (1565), and Sir Richard Weston, Earl of Portland, Lord High Treasurer (1594); in window V, Sir George Talbot, 9th Earl of Shrewsbury (1561), and Sir Charles Blount, 8th

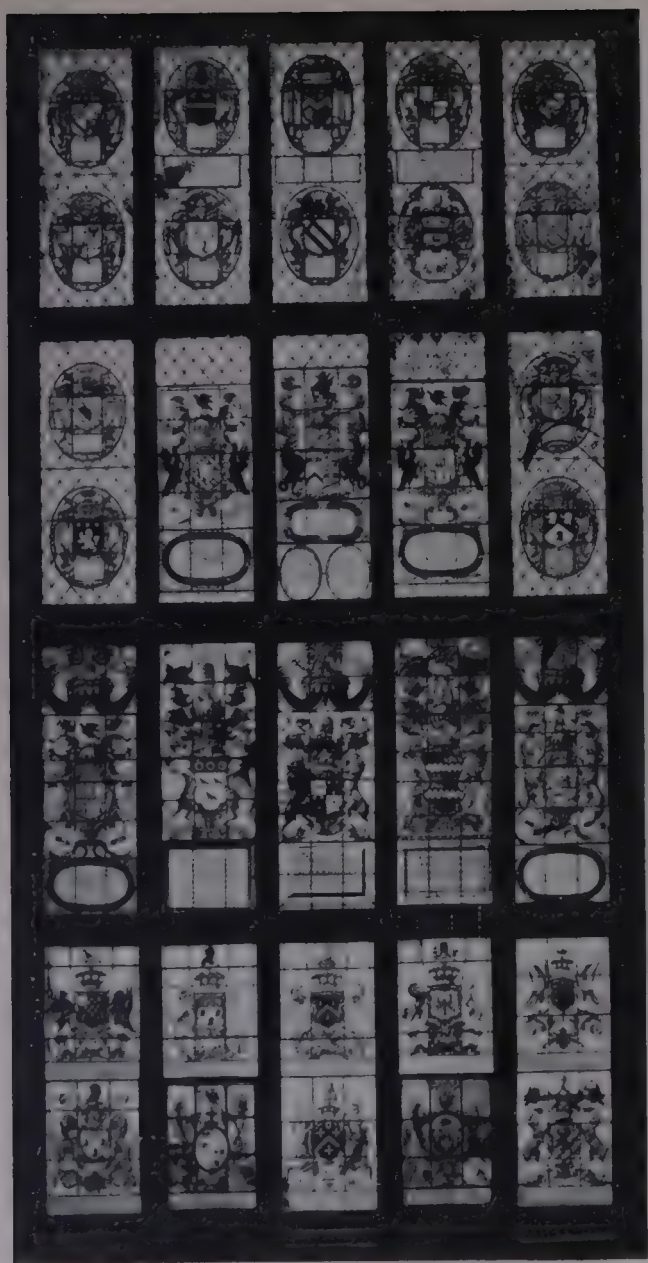
Lord Mountjoy, and Earl of Devonshire (1579); in window VI, Sir Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester (1660); in window IX, Sir William Somerset, 8th Earl of Worcester (1562); and Sir Henry Hastings, 20th Earl of Huntingdon (1561); and in window XI, Sir Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland, the friend of Raleigh and a promoter of the Virginia enterprise (admitted 1594). In the window last mentioned will also be found the memorial of Sir Walter Raleigh himself, courtier, soldier, scholar, and founder of Britain's Colonial Empire; surely, though his career ended in dire disaster, "one of the gallantest worthies ever England bred." Raleigh joined the Society on February 27th, 1574.

The oldest memorials in stained glass in the Hall are in the window behind the gallery (XIV). With two exceptions the persons there commemorated were all living before or in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Ten were Treasurers of the Inn, of whom two, Thomas Andrews and Matthew Smith, held that office in succession to Edmund Plowden, and during the completion of the building of the Hall. The earliest memorial in this window is that of Thomas Denton, who made a report to King Henry VIII regarding the constitution of the Inns of Court. The two latest commemorate Judges of the time of Charles II—Thomas Walcot, a Justice of the King's Bench (1683), and Sir Edward Turner, Chief Baron of the Exchequer (1671). The last named was also Speaker of the first House of Commons summoned after the Restoration,



a Parliament which lasted for 12 years. Sir Nicholas Hyde is also commemorated here. The uncle of Lord Chancellor Clarendon, he was Chief Justice in 1626. Another Coat of Arms in this window deserving of special notice, is that of Edward Osborne, "Alderman of London;" the first Governor of the Turkey Company, Lord Mayor in 1583, and founder of the Ducal Family of Leeds. By no means the only Alderman admitted to the Society, his case is typical of the friendly relations which existed between the Middle Temple and the City of London, in an age renowned for its merchant adventurers.

The window at the West end of the Hall (VII) now contains no private memorials. Its 12 heraldic devices are displayed in two rows. In the upper row, at both ends, are the Arms of the Middle Temple, and between these 4 royal badges, all crowned, (1) the fleur de lis of France, reminiscent of the ancient claim of English Kings to be the rightful heirs of that throne also; (2) the double rose of York and Lancaster, the badge of Henry VIII and his issue; (3) the pomegranate of Katherine of Aragon and her daughter, Queen Mary Tudor; (4) the falcon in the fetter lock, the badge of Edward IV, derived from his ancestor, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York and 5th son of Edward III. At the ends of the lower row are the royal Arms of the Stuart Sovereigns, James I to James II. Next these, two examples of the Arms of England, ancient (Richard I to Edward II), and in the centre, twice repeated, the



Middle Temple Hall.--South Bay Window.



Royal Arms of England, from Henry IV to Elizabeth, viz., France modern and England quarterly. The colouring of this window has a singularly rich and pleasing effect.

Passing now to the great South window (VI), in the central position at the top are the Arms of Edmund Plowden, already mentioned, and next to them those of Sir Edward Montagu, Chief Justice in the reign of Henry VIII, and the founder of a distinguished family which has contributed many members to the Inn. His grandson, Sir Henry Montagu, commemorated in window No. V, as Recorder of London, succeeded Sir Edward Coke as Chief Justice in 1616, and, after serving in other offices of State, was created Viscount Mandeville and Earl of Manchester. Further, the great grandson of Sir Edward, the Hon. William Montagu, whose Arms are also displayed in this window, was Chief Baron of the Exchequer (1676—1686). Indeed, so greatly did this family prosper, that by the reign of Charles II they held the four peerages of Montagu, Manchester, Sandwich and Halifax, two of which, in the next century, were advanced to ducal rank. With the Montagus may be compared the great family of the Hydes, four of whom are commemorated in this window, viz., Edward Hyde, Lord Chancellor Clarendon, Minister of Charles II and historian of the Civil War; his two sons, Henry, second Earl of Clarendon, and Laurence, Earl of Rochester; and his cousin, Sir Robert Hyde, the second Chief Justice of the family (1663). In this window also are the Arms of

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Lord Clifford (Lord Treasurer), a member of the " Cabal " Ministry, which succeeded to power on Lord Clarendon's fall, and of the following holders of the Great Seal—Sir Francis North, Lord Guilford (1682), Lord Somers (1692), Earl Cowper, first Lord Chancellor of Great Britain (1707), Sir Philip Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke, Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor (1736—1756), who, for a time, held both of these great offices concurrently, and Sir John Scott, Earl of Eldon; also of the following further Chief Justices—Sir Edmund Saunders (1682), Sir George Treby (1692), Lord Kenyon (1788), Lord Tenterden (1816), Sir Wm. Best, Lord Wynford (1824); and among Masters of the Rolls, Sir Joseph Jekyll (1717), Sir Richard Pepper Arden, Lord Alvanley (1788), and Lord Gifford (1824).

Here also are memorials of Sir William Scott, Lord Stowell, Judge of Admiralty (1798), and Sir Thomas Smith, a distinguished scholar (at one time Provost of Eton), who was Secretary of State to King Edward VI, and a Privy Councillor of Queen Elizabeth.

The window in the North bay (VIII) contains (i.e.) the Arms of three Masters of the Rolls—Sir Edward Phelipps (1610), who was also speaker of the House of Commons (1604—1610), Sir John Strange (1750), and Sir Thomas Sewell (1764). But its chief interest centres in three Speakers it commemorates, who in succession held that high office over a period of 53 years—Arthur Onslow (1727—1761), Sir John Cust (1761—1770), and Sir Fletcher Norton, later Baron Grantley (1770—1780), all being Benchers of the Inn.

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Of the many Coats of Arms in the side-windows only some brief notes will be added, confined chiefly to the older memorials, for it is not proposed to discuss here those recently erected, though some of them will certainly rank in history as not inferior in interest to any that have gone before. In window I are commemorated (i.a.), *second row*, Sir William Periam, Chief Baron of the Exchequer (1593—1604), *third row*, Sir Antony Hart, Lord Chancellor of Ireland (1827), and Sir John Leach, Master of the Rolls (1827). In window II, *third row*, notice the Arms of Sir John Jervis, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (1850).

In window III the following are of special interest—*second row*, Ferdinand, Lord Strange, afterwards 5th Earl of Derby, the Amyntas of Spenser's poem "Colin Clouts come home again," and John, Lord Darcy (admitted 1562); *third row*, Sir Robert Barkley and Sir Thomas Malett, Justices of the King's Bench, 1632 and 1641 (whose panels as Readers have already been noticed), and the only Judges known to have been removed with violence from the seat of justice while discharging their judicial duties; the first by order of the House of Lords because he gave an opinion in favour of the right of the Crown to levy ship money without the consent of Parliament, and the second, by order of the House of Commons because he refused to allow a proclamation to be read in his court for raising troops against the King.

In window IV, *top row*, Edward Horsey should be noticed, who was Captain-General of the Isle of Wight,



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where he held vigilant guard against the Spaniards for Queen Elizabeth; and in the *third row*, Sir John Bramston, Lord Chief Justice (1635—1642). In this window the Arms of Pepys do not commemorate the celebrated Diarist, who was not a member of the Middle Temple, but either Talbot Pepys (Treasurer, 1640), or more probably his kinsman, Sir Richard Pepys, Chief Justice of Ireland (1655).

In window V, *top row*, are the Arms of Sir Antony Browne, Viscount Mountagu (admitted 1594); and in the *third row*, of Sir Robert Catlyn, Chief Justice (1560—1574), and Sir Henry Montagu, as Recorder of London, already noticed under window VI.

Turning to the North side of the Hall, in window IX may be seen the memorials of the following members—*top row*, Sir Ludovic, third Lord Mordaunt (succeeded 1571), whose family were long identified with the Middle Temple, his father and grandfather, the second and first Barons, being also members; *third row*, Sir Thomas Edmondes, Ambassador (1604), and Treasurer of the Royal Household (1616); Sir Robert Brooke, Speaker and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (1554); and Sir John Doddridge, King's Serjeant and Judge in the reign of James I. The last two memorials are restorations of Arms formerly in the Hall, but destroyed, no doubt, by accident.

In window X are the Arms (*top row*) of George Carey, Ambassador to Poland (1599), to France (1609), and an historical writer; *second row*, of Sir James



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Dyer, eminent for his learning, and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (1559—1581).

In window XI may be noticed the arms of the following members—*top row*, Sir Robert Napper, Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland (1593), and George, Lord Audley (admitted 1573); *second row*, Sir Walter Raleigh, already mentioned, Sir John Popham, Speaker and Chief Justice (1592), and Edward, third Lord Windesor (1558), of a family long connected with the Inn, each holder of the Barony being a member of the Society, till it became extinct with the sixth Baron; *third row*, Edward, second Lord Stafford, grandson of the Duke of Buckingham, executed by King Henry VIII in 1521, and son of the first Lord Stafford, restored in blood by Act of Parliament, 1547.

In window XII are the Arms of Richard Hakluyt (*top row*) whose interest in maritime discoveries inspired the famous book of voyages composed by his kinsman of the same name; and, *third row*, of Sir Richard Lane, Lord Keeper to Charles I and Charles II (1645—50), who died in exile.

In window XIII are memorials of Sir John Maynard (*second row*), King's Serjeant (1660), and Commissioner of the Great Seal (1689), the most learned lawyer of his time, who, when congratulated in 1688 by William of Orange on having outlived all his contemporaries, replied, " Sir, I had like to have outlived the Law itself had Your Highness not come over "; *third row*, Sir John Taylor Coleridge, Justice of the

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King's Bench (1835), and Sir William Erle, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (1859).

It was not to be expected that a building which has braved the London atmosphere for more than three centuries, should have escaped renovation from time to time. Inevitably the interior of the Hall has been subjected to repeated cleanings in the long course of its history, but fortunately all that has been done in this way has been with a view to the preservation and perpetuation of its original charm. In essential characteristics it remains unchanged. The Arms in its windows, which unquestionably formed part of the original design of its builders, have necessarily multiplied with the advance of time, and this, as records of the windows made at different times sufficiently prove, has involved repeated re-arrangements of these memorials. Few of the older ones now occupy their original places. The last important work of this kind was carried out in 1850—1, when the arrangements now prevailing in the windows at both ends of the Hall and in the two bays were adopted. At that time also the quarries of clear cathedral glass were renewed throughout all the side windows. Such a renewal must have involved the temporary removal of all the Arms from these windows, no doubt accompanied by some breakages, which could only be repaired with new stained glass; so that it must not be implied that all the memorials seen to-day are the original glass.

As the number of the Readers' panels has increased there may also have been some re-arrangement of them,

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though as to this there is less evidence. Among later Readers most of the Lent panels are on the North side of the Hall and the Summer panels on the South. At different times many of them have been repainted. The last evidence of this occurs in 1827, when also in certain cases the gilt mountings were regilded. A hundred years later, when time and London fogs had greatly dimmed their effect, washing and a coat of varnish has sufficed to restore their brightness as seen to-day.

The hammer beam roof has been the subject of more substantial repairs, the latest of these, carried out so recently as the year 1924, was primarily directed to the extermination of the Death Watch beetle, an insect the grub of which (*Xestobium Tesselatum*) did so much damage to the oak of Westminster Hall. Neither time nor expense was spared to remedy the injury done by this pest and to provide against its recurrence, so that the roof is now believed to be in a sound and secure condition. An examination of the accounts of the Inn has revealed the fact that the beams of the roof in common with the screen have been repeatedly coated with brown varnish, thus in both instances concealing the true colour of the wood (still to be seen, it is said, where the oak is not visible from the floor), that delightful golden brown so pleasing to the eye in Westminster Hall.

If time has dealt lightly with the interior of the Hall and only modified its appearance by adding to its ornaments, the same cannot be said of the exterior, which

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has undergone repeated transformations, and, regarding these, a few further words must be added. The tower, which forms to-day so distinctive a feature of the outside of the building, had no place in the original design. At first there were chambers over the entrance and adjoining it next Middle Temple Lane. The roof was tiled, not slated, and there were no battlements along the tops of the walls.

The first alteration was made in 1667, when a belfry to contain a bell and clock was erected on the roof of the chambers over the entrance. The account of William Wightman, the bell-caster, shows that the bell he provided weighed 400 lbs. The belfry seems to have been a wooden structure and its general appearance, as first set up, is shown in a picture by Samuel Scott (a friend of Hogarth) now in the possession of the hon. Society of the Inner Temple and here reproduced. From this view of the Hall it will also be noticed that the approach to the entrance door was at this time up circular steps.

A few years later, in the Treasurership of Sir Francis Winnington (1675), there were serious indications that the weight of the roof was forcing the walls out of the perpendicular at the South-West end of the Hall; a condition of things aggravated by subsidence. To remedy this, the foundations were strengthened, and extensive repairs carried out at the South bay window; the Summer Reading being postponed till Lent in order that the work might proceed without delay.

In 1681, the fountain, which has since been so



Middle Temple Hall. - North Front with Belfry erected 1667.





Middle Temple Hall and Fountain.—From Painting by Jcs. Nichols, 1738.





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attractive a feature of Hall Court, was made, and supplied with water from the New River Company, which under full pressure could rise to a height of thirty feet. This fountain, at one time seriously disfigured by the erection of much stone and metal work in the centre of the basin, was happily restored to its original simplicity, by Bernard second Lord Coleridge during his Treasurership in 1919, and thus it is seen to-day as originally planned, except that the pallisadoes which at first enclosed it, fortunately have not been renewed. Consecrated in the pages of romance by the genius of Charles Dickens (himself a member of the Middle Temple Society), it still throws aloft, in a single jet, its pellucid waters—fit emblem of purity and joy in this ancient home of the Templars.

In 1699 the tiling of the Hall roof, which appears from the accounts to have required constant attention, was entirely renewed, 13,000 plain tiles being required for the purpose.

In 1745 further external repairs became necessary through serious decay in the North front of the building. In consequence the entrance and its adjoining chambers were taken down and rebuilt, the lintelling of the side windows of the Hall renewed, and a battlemented parapet of brick outlined in stone erected along the top of the North wall, giving it, for the first time, the appearance it still presents to-day. In the rebuilding the belfry or clockhouse was made lighter and more elegant, and the entrance door of the Hall, which had hitherto been of plain appearance, decorated with side

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pillars supporting an architrave. At the same time the steps leading up to the door were reconstructed in square formation, and with stone obelisks at the sides to carry lamps. Further at this time the original cupola, or lantern, over the Hall was taken down and a new one erected in its place.

Thirteen years later, in 1758, the South wall and West end again required repair. On this occasion a large quantity of Portland stone was used, as well as brick, and the high stone pinnacles which still surmount the buttresses at the West end probably date from this period. In carrying out the work, three two-storey shops, which had been erected against the West end of the Hall, were finally removed. A picture of the Hall, painted in 1738 by Joseph Nichols and in the possession of the Middle Temple Society, shows the West end with these shops still *in situ*. There was no further interference with the exterior of the building in the eighteenth century, and an engraving prepared for Ireland's "Inns of Court," published in 1800, when contrasted with the earlier picture by Scott, shows the transformation effected by these alterations and repairs in the North front.

The next change came on the South side of the Hall, when, in 1824-5, two chambers were there erected against the building, both now Parliament Chambers, though the larger one was used as the Library of the Society till 1861.

In 1826 the tiling which had so long covered the roof was stripped off, the woodwork beneath it re-



Middle Temple Hall.—North Front as altered 1745.



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paired, and a new covering of Welsh rag slating substituted, instead of the former tiles. At the same time the top parapet of the North wall was renewed and the cupola put up in 1745 (being much decayed) replaced by a new one designed by Mr. Hakewell, Architect of the Society, and considered more in keeping with the character of the Hall. This cupola, though since repaired, still remains to-day.

The final change in the North front of the Hall came a few years later, when, in 1831, the belfry and chambers over and adjoining the entrance were taken down, and the present clock tower with turret staircase in one corner and surmounted by four ogee pinnacles was erected in their place, affording the advantage of adding a vestibule to the entrance but shutting off all communication with the gallery from the inside of the Hall.

Only one other matter remains to be noticed here. The area now along the North front was first excavated in the Treasurership of Master James Anderson, Q.C., whose name, as Treasurer, with the date 1861, is recorded on a stone at the West end built into the side wall of the North bay.

And now a few words in closing regarding the social life this Hall has witnessed. The law is a jealous mistress and strenuous toil must be the portion of those who seek her favours. Yet an Inn of Court, as has been well said, is a great human fellowship, and lawyers from the earliest times have not lacked their periods of relaxation and festivity. These at first, so

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far as visitors were concerned, centred round the Readings; for the Reader's office being one of honour was graced with certain privileges of hospitality. Hence the practice arose of the Reader giving entertainments, to which were bidden not only members of his own Society, but likewise distinguished guests from other Inns of Court and other walks in life. Innocent and even commendable in their origin, these entertainments as time went on grew into disrepute through the temptation they offered to extravagance and prodigality. The classic example of this abuse is the famous reading of Sir Francis North, given in this Hall in the summer of 1671, when he was Solicitor-General to King Charles II, and dispensed a hospitality so prodigious that it is said to have cost him £7,000! A practice leading to such results could not be suffered to continue, and was terminated shortly after by the intervention of the Crown. But the instinct of hospitality survived and found expression in the institution of "Grand Days," kept at certain intervals, when entertainment on a more reasonable scale continued to be offered, as it still is to-day, to such guests as the Society might wish so to honour. Thus, looking back over the long vista of this Hall's history, it may be confidently asserted that of those eminent in the public life of the nation during the last three centuries, there have been few, who have not at one time or another occupied a place within its walls. If they could be summoned here once more what a pageant of history would they present!





Middle Temple Hall with Tower erected 1852.



## MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL.

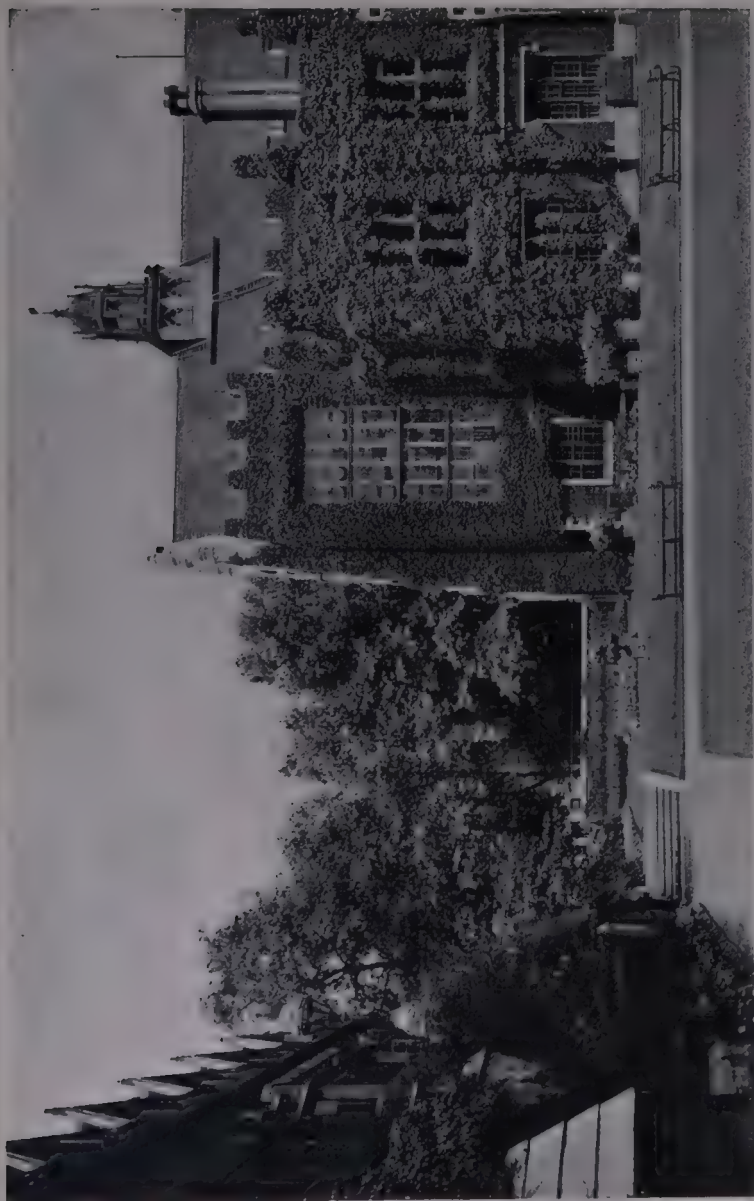
A room of such antiquity and so long an active centre of legal life has naturally been the scene of notable and interesting events, regarding which much might be written, did space permit. But here it must suffice to refer to two occasions only in its history, both occurring in the reign of the great Queen with whose sanction this Hall was built, and who herself, if a tradition recorded two centuries ago may be trusted, frequently graced it with her royal presence.

The first centres round that famous sea captain whose name has already been mentioned in connection with the Cupboard Table and the Lamp in the passage behind the Screen. Information regarding it comes from a contemporary memorandum entered in the Orders Book of the Benchers and the circumstance that the entry was made in Latin (usually reserved for weighty matters) and signed by all the Benchers who were present on the occasion, shows the high importance attached to the incident. The entry will speak best for itself. Translated, it reads as follows—  
“ On Thursday the 4th day of August, Anno Domini 1586, and the 28th year of the reign of the Lady Elizabeth Queen, Sir Francis Drake, Knt., one of the Company of the Middle Temple (*unus de consortio Medii Templi*) after the voyage successfully completed under the blessing of Almighty God upon which he had set out the year before, came at the time of dinner into the Hall of the Middle Temple and acknowledged to John Savile, Esq., then Reader, Matthew Dale, Thomas Bowyer, John Agmondesham, and Thomas

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Hanham, Masters of the Bench there present, his old time intimacy and friendship (*antiquam familiaritatem et amicitiam*) with the Company of the Gentlemen of the Middle Temple aforesaid, all of the said Company then present in the Hall congratulating him with one accord and great joy upon his happy return." Drake, who had arrived at Plymouth a few days earlier, from his great expedition with 25 ships against the Spanish Indies, was at this time the darling of the Nation, and modern Templars may surely be grateful for this simple record which thus intimately connects their ancient Hall with that daring spirit whose undaunted courage first opened the way to Empire beyond the seas.

The second occasion of which mention will be made fell on Candlemas Day the 2nd of February, 1601. It was a day annually celebrated in the Society by the entertainment at dinner of Judges and Serjeants who formerly had been members of the Inn, and following the custom of the time the proceedings included the performance of a play for the pleasure of the guests. Little is known regarding the plays thus performed in the Temple in "the golden age of English Drama." The Benchers in their Records did not condescend to notice them, and, as already stated, there are no surviving Account Books of the Society for this early period. But on this occasion light fortunately comes from the diary of a member of the Society, John Manningham, who was present in the audience and has left a description of the play. Thus it is known that the play which delighted the guests (for who can doubt



Middle Temple Hall and Parliament Chambers.—South View from Garden.



## MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL.

that it did so?) was "Twelfth Night or What You Will," and that the actors were Shakespeare's own company. On this no better comment can be made than the words used by a devoted lover of Shakespeare—"The actual roof under which the happy company of Benchers and Barristers and Students first listened to that joyous and exhilarating play, full of the truest and most beautiful humanities, is still standing; and we may walk into that stately hall and think,—here Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' was acted in 1601; and here its exquisite poetry first fell upon the ear of some secluded scholar, and was to him as a fragrant flower blooming amid the arid sands of his Bracton and Fleta; and here its gentle satire upon the vain and foolish penetrated into the natural heart of some grave and formal dispenser of justice, and made him look with tolerance if not with sympathy upon the mistakes of less grave and formal fellow-men . . . . Venerable Hall of the Middle Temple, thou art to our eyes more stately and more to be admired since we looked upon that entry in the Table-book of John Manningham! The Globe has perished and so has the Blackfriars. The works of the poet who made these frail buildings immortal need no associations to recommend them; but it is yet pleasant to know that there is one locality remaining where a play of Shakespeare was listened to by his contemporaries; and that play 'Twelfth Night.' "

The occasion, as already stated, was an ordinary one in the routine of the Society. Of other like occa-



#### MIDDLE TEMPLE HALL.

sions no information is available. But may it not reasonably be inferred that on some of these also, the same company of players in this Hall delighted the audience, and that too with the greatest of all poets himself included in the caste !











